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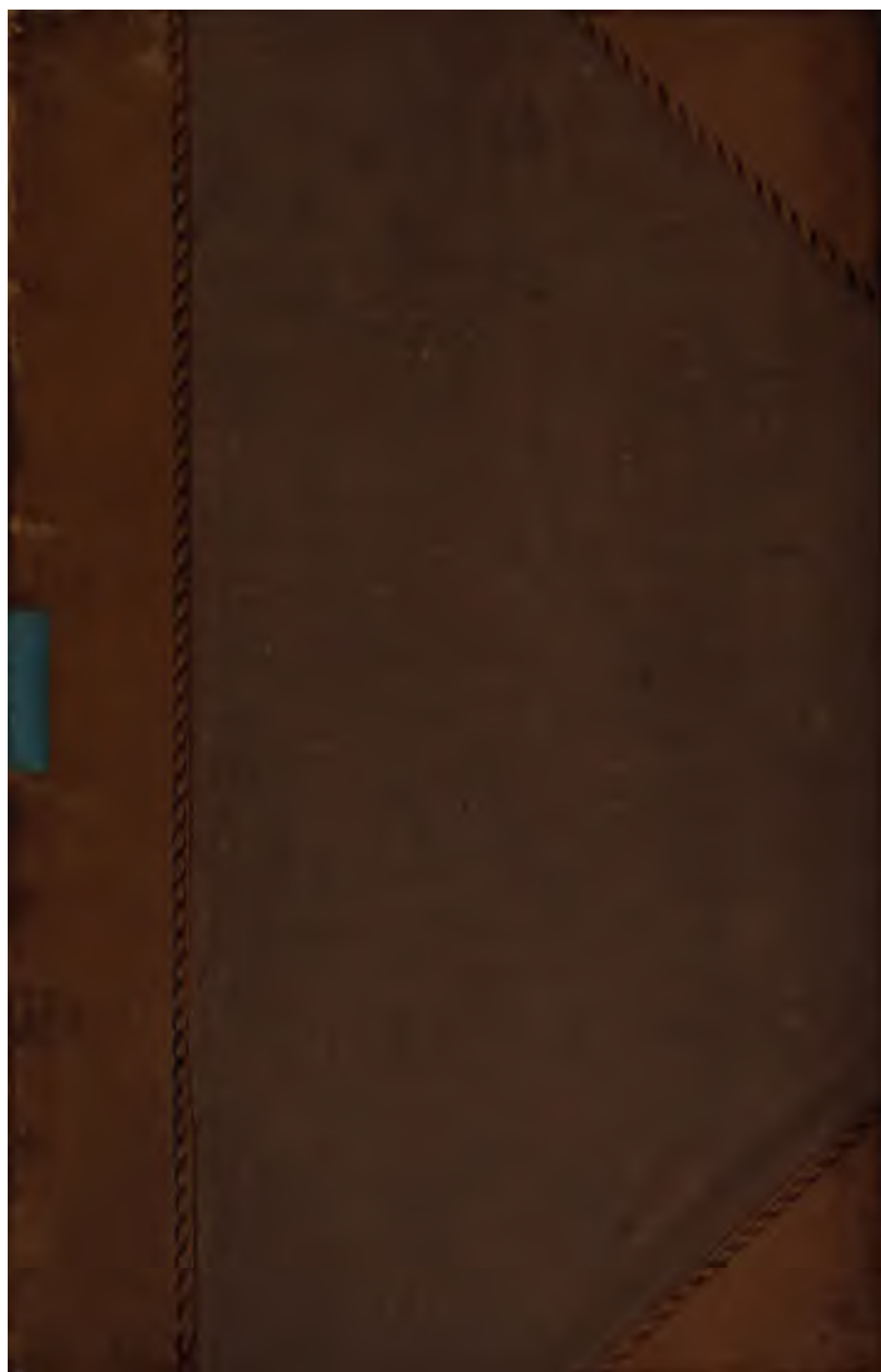
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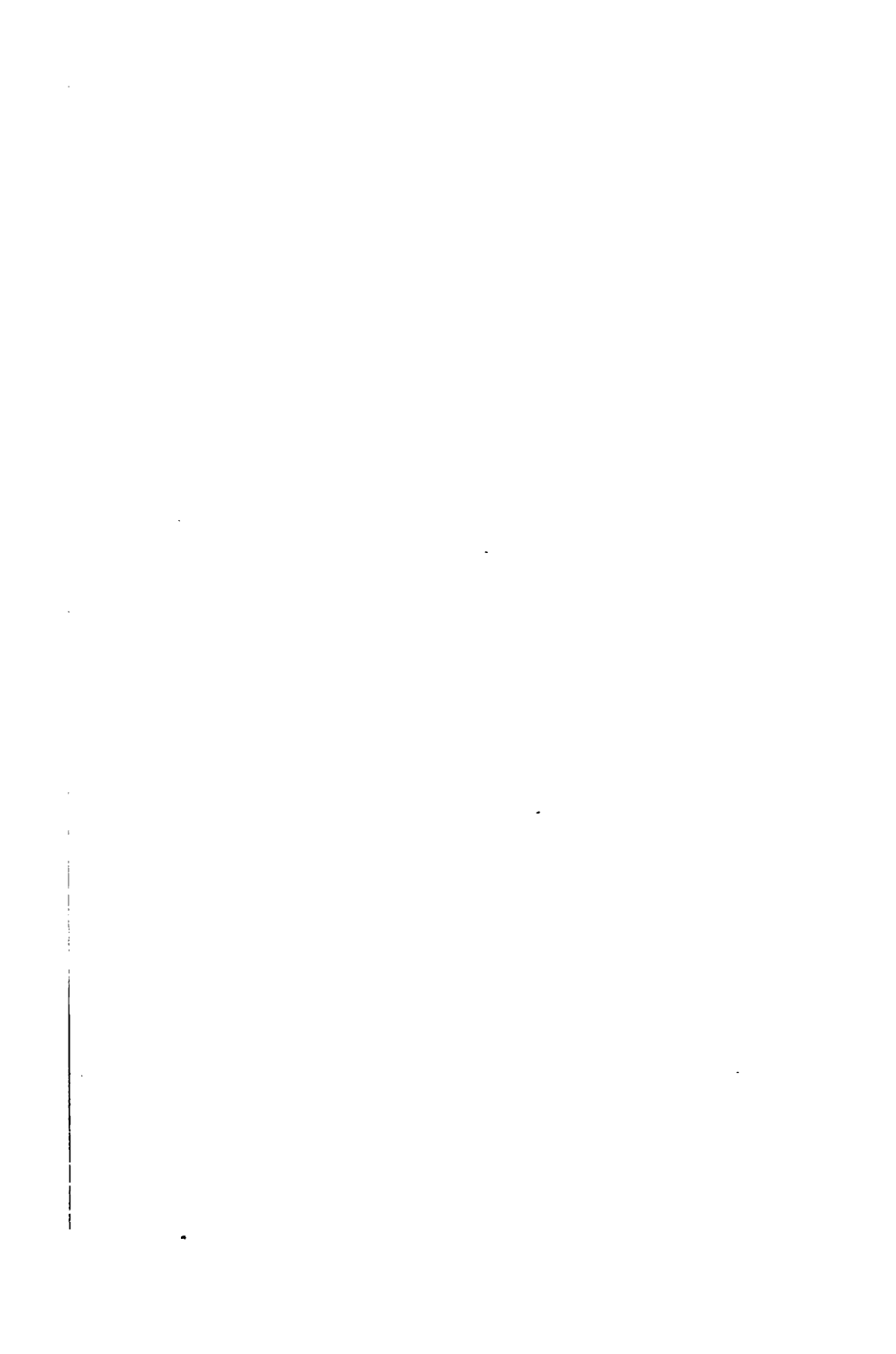


40.

490.







M O R A.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY SLATCH AND LAMPERT, GROVE PLACE, BROMPTON.

M O R A

A Fragment of a Tale.

" I never heard
Of any true affection, but 'twas nipt
With care; that, like the caterpillar, eats
The leaves of the Spring's sweetest book—the rose."
MIDDLETON.

LONDON
SAUNDERS AND OTLEY, CONDUIT STREET.
1840.

490.



TO
THOMAS MOORE, ESQ.

This Poem

IS DEDICATED BY A FRIEND AND ADMIRER
OF HIS TALENTS,

ROBERT GUN CUNINGHAME.

Mount Kennedy.

ERRATA.

Page 25, line 4, *for to read may.*

„ 32, 18, *for light read sight.*

„ 38, 6, *for Curlew read Petrel.*

„ 48, 11, *for face read force.*

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Tale on which the following Poem is founded, is the Romance of Robert à Machin with Anna d'Arfet, of which a full account may be seen in Bankes's Geography. It was there I met with it, and conceived from the same the present work, with a little change of story, persons, and climate. It is, as the Reader will perceive, written in fragments, as if the Tale were narrated.

M O R A.

CANTO I.

La vita nostra, ch' é si bella in vista,
Come perd' agevolménte in un mattino
Qual che in molt' anni gran pena s'acquista!
O Speranze! O desir sempre fallace!

PETRARCA, tom. iii.

FAR o'er the waters of the west,
By gentle skies and zephyrs blest,
Where orange grove and myrtle share
The empire of the balmy air,
A lonely and a lovely isle
O'er the blue wave is seen to smile,
And lightly rears its varied head
Above old Ocean's briny bed;
There, clothed in Nature's rich array,
It cheers the seaman on his way;

There, moor'd within yon beauteous bay,
The weary seaman loves to stay.

.

Many a vanished age hath fled
Since dawned that isle on human eye,
And o'er the long forgotten dead
Who heed not if we weep or sigh;
Years have gone by, and left no trace
Of one, who first on that sweet land,
To 'scape a despot's loathed embrace,
Alighted on the lonely strand!
And did she come to die alone?
Did none attend the wandering fair?
Yes, one; beneath yon mouldering stone
There once did rest a lovely pair!

.

And what of him or her remain
That now should claim a passing tear?
What fills the pilgrim's heart with pain?
What makes him fondly linger there?
Their very dust is gone; and Time,
Which long that dust hath swept away,
Respects nor age, nor love, nor clime
Of those who die, or those who stay!

Yet there is something in their tale
That well a heartfelt sigh may claim,
And cause e'en sternest hearts to wail
Alonzo's love, and Mora's shame.

.

The stream is rolling soft and clear,
The perfumed zephyr breathes its sigh,
And o'er yon crested brows appear
The light clouds idly passing by!
The sun hath sunk in western wave,
In one wide blaze of golden light;
While scarce a ripple serves to lave
Yon jutting rock which gleams so bright.
The turtle now with thrilling lay
Hath cooed and hushed its mate to rest,
And loveliest night succeeds the day
In this sweet Island of the West!

.

'Twas then the same as it is now,
For Nature there hath made no change,
And Time, upon yon lovely brow,
(Which peers so high above the range
Of those bright hills,) hath passed in vain;
And they appear as rich in hue,

And still shall there the same remain,
Till that fair isle shall fade from view,
For then alone a change will be !
A change that all must undergo,
E'en time into Eternity !
That last and dreaded change must know !

.

Brief is the time we pass on earth,
Yet long enough for man to bear !
The gift we gather at our birth,
Our first and latest hour doth share !
With the first dawn of reason's ray
That glimmers o'er the opening soul,
Enough is seen of that decay
Which leads us to our final goal.
And we must batten on the fruit,
Though bitter to the taste it be,
Till death at last shall cut the root
Which binds us to humanity.
Yet still through life's revolving scene,
One light is seen to shed its ray
Of fancied bliss—too soon, I ween,
To fade in grief, and pass away.

So darken'd is our mortal fate,
 So hid by clouds that interpose,
That bliss, denied by other's hate,
 Ne'er finds in life a sure repose !
'Tis as the phantom-light o'er moors,
 Which woos the wanderer to a rest ;
Yet blest that ray, while it allures,
 Though doomed at length to prove a jest.
And ever through this life, Love must,
 What it has been, to all remain !
It shares the birthright of that dust
 Which ne'er is free from mortal stain.
Too pure within this world to dwell,
 Without the rust of life's alloy,
Love ne'er within the heart did swell,
 But felt the bane of earthly joy.
Yet there are moments in this life,
 Which some have felt of source so pure,
So free from all life's feverish strife,
 They could for these all ills endure ;
But when they fail, and fail they will,
 Ah ! who thro' life hath found them last ?
There comes upon the soul a chill,
 The icing of that fearful blast,

Which sinks the heart, and bids it close
Each pulse that warmed to hope and love.
Thus chill'd, no more can it oppose
The ice which binds around, above ;
But fetter'd by its dreary chain,
The living source beneath confined,
Ne'er feels a wish to break again
The deadly stillness of the mind.

.

And why did young Alonzo bear
Fair Mora to a distant shore ?
Condemn'd another's lot to share,
She ne'er must love Alonzo more ;
But bending to the harsh decree,
That reft her heart from all it prized,
Prepared to bear such misery
With one her very soul despised,
Why Mora urge to break that vow
Which she had paid at Cintra's shrine ?
Why raise anew some thoughts, which now
Too fondly to the past incline ?

.

From earliest youth together bred,
By earliest thoughts and love allied,

By that sweet interchange of mind
Which leaves all trace of self behind ;
Thus life's young years o'er them had fled,
When wandering by each other's side
O'er the wild beauties of their land,
Through loveliest vales, they hand in hand,
In all the innocence of youth,
Had plighted then their mutual truth ;
And little thought the hour would come
For them to leave that verdant home,
To plunge amid the deep excess
Of guilt—the bane of happiness !
And well it was, that Fate concealed
To them the weight of future woe,
In future days to be revealed—
Alas ! too late to ward the blow !

.

Fairest and last of Conrad's race,
Rose Mora, full of youthful grace,
And in her mild expressive face,
Love's every charm you there might trace.
Her smile was as the sunny ray
You see in summer's earliest day,

And from her beauteous eyes of blue,
When shaded by the lashes dark,
Which half concealed their azure hue,
There beamed a rich and living spark,
That glowed with all the force of Love,
When those blue eyes were turned above,
To gaze upon her native sky
In all the charm of purity,
While o'er her happy careless brow

Her light hair fell in graceful fold !
Alas ! that brow is senseless now,
That eye is closed, that form is cold ;
And o'er that form the worm hath fed
With reckless maw above the dead,
And crawled within its mouldering prey,
Till face and form have passed away !

.

The convent bell is gently ringing,
Within the aisle the choir are singing,
And through the wild and hawthorn dell
The organ peals in richest swell.
The measured hymn of evening prayer
Now vibrates on the distant air ;

But there is more in one sweet tone,
Which now is heard, and steals alone,
So full, so soft upon the heart;
Could one have wished that hour to part
From life, and charm his soul away;
'Twould be, when rose that gentle lay,
From Mora's sweet melodious voice :
'Twould bid e'en woe itself rejoice,
And from the Stoic's heart distil,
Perchance, one pure and holy thrill !
'Tis gone and past ; but on the ear
That heavenly tone yet trembles near,
And every breath is hushed and still ;
While o'er the frame a tremulous chill
Asserts the magic of that power,
When music breathes at twilight's hour !
But ne'er again within that aisle,
Such maid hath since been seen to smile,
Or raise again such feeling lay,
As Mora breathed at close of day !

.

And who is he that claims her hand,
And woos the maiden for his bride?
Greeting a parent's stern command,

That would young Mora's love deride.
Of princely house and lineage high,
Gonzalvo, Lord of Cintra, came ;
And deemed that wealth and ancestry,
With all the record of his fame,
Could win fair Mora to his love !
Alas ! he little knew that mind,
Nor wealth could win, nor threats could move
From early vows of love ; which bind
The heart within their magic spell !
They twine too close, to be forgot,
Around the breast ; where long shall dwell,
(Whate'er in life may be our lot,)
The sweet remembrance of that hour
When love first wooed us to his bower !

.

Yes, in the heart there long shall dwell
The charm of that pure early dream ;
And though the clouds of ill may swell,
They only hide in part its beam !
And though succeeding cares may chill
The glow of love's first trembling ray,
Yet to the treasuring memory still,
That beam through life shall not decay !

When sickened with the toil of life,
And sinking 'mid the weary gloom
With which this mortal coil is rife,
(To lose it only in the tomb!)
Who hath not tried to trace anew
The cherished thought of early love,
And in his breast the dream renew
Of bliss, that grief could not remove?
Oh! o'er the worn and sinking heart,
The star of early love shall shed
A beam, which only can depart,
When thought, and sense, and life are fled!

.

Within the gloom of Conrad's tower,
Fair Mora felt a parent's power,
And severed from Alonzo's side,
A few short days must soon decide
The fate of her who loved too well!
Who wanders through the hawthorn dell?
And as the gathering clouds of night
Obscure the moon's decreasing light,
What form is seen to ponder there,
With faded look, and haggard air?

And wildly o'er yon crested brow,
With frantic step it hurries now,
As if to court the tempest's wrath,
Which beats above, around his path!
As if to meet the lightning's shock,
That fiercely strikes upon the rock!
'Tis his, Alonzo's! in whose breast
No hope remains of peace or rest!
The storm may beat, the tempest lour,
He heeds them not at such an hour!

.

The night of storm hath passed away,
And with the dawn's reviving ray
Each trace of storm and night hath past;
Another, and it is the last
Which yet shall rise to that sad pair,
Ere they are doomed to woe and care;
Ere they must bid adieu for life,
And bear that bitterness of strife,
Which faithful hearts, condemned to sever,
Must feel, and feeling, live to wither.

.

O'er what does now fair Mora weep,
And drink at sorrow's fountain deep,

And wildly press against her heart
What never from that heart shall part ?
The last and sad farewell of one,
Who now from her and love is gone,
And in the madness of despair,
Hath traced the lines of anguish there,
And sent this last and sad farewell,
To one who loved him, oh, too well !

.

“ Well, we must part, and through life’s journey now,
Naught to each other but as strangers be ;
And to the stern decree must meekly bow,
Though pained may be our heart, and dimmed our e’e.
’Tis as it should be : for perhaps had we
Too fondly dwelt on our delicious theme,
Which pictured all we hoped, and would not see
Aught as it must be, but denied truth’s beam,
We might have ne’er awoke from love’s deceitful dream.

“ To thee the pang, once past, will come no more ;
’Twill cost thee but a few young bitter tears,
The fullness of a heart which must run o’er,
To be forgotten in the chill of years !
Reft from the source of all my hopes and fears,

Alone and comfortless I pass away,
Since o'er life's dark horizon there appears
No star to cheer me with its tremulous ray,
Which could have warmed this heart, and kept it from
decay.

" Yes, thou wilt listen to Gonzalvo's tale,
For thou art fair, and beautiful, and young,
And love shall fan thee with its odorous gale,
Cheating thy fond heart with the flatterer's tongue;
While I no more shall in thy memory be,
Than a mere fleeting shadow in a glass.
Well, let it be—but thou, dear maid, to me,
Shalt form an image ne'er from life to pass,
Though trampled be this heart, like shorn and shrivelled
grass."

.

She read that letter o'er again,
So full of grief, rebuke and pain,
And felt that now the cup of woe
For her might fill and overflow ;
Since light her love Alonzo deem'd.—
Though by another lord esteemed,
Could she *that dream* of love forget ?
No: twined in every fond regret,

It ne'er, while sense and life were left,
Should from her faithful heart be reft.

.

She placed her hand upon her brow—
Oh ! how it burned and fevered now,
With that convulsive thought of grief,
Which seeks its pain and spurns relief !
Oh ! in that agony of mind
When deemed by one we love, unkind,
The fever of our heart runs o'er,
And feels life's bitterness the more,
When those to whom our thoughts were given,
Can deem such thoughts were lightly riven.
Ah ! little reck the votaries gay,
Who heartless pass their life away,
What pang the faithful heart must feel,
When those we love direct the steel.

.

The morn has come, the glorious sun
Hath blythely now his course begun,
And nature freshening with the day,
Rejoices as the sunbeams play.
The woodlands teem with melody,
And all attuned to harmony,

The earth, the air, the sky above
Seem full of peace, of joy and love.
So mild, so gentle is the breeze,
It scarcely murmurs through the trees,
While lightly near the cataract's roar
Above the rocks is heard to pour.
And in the river's gurgling bed,
The wild deer now delights to tread,
Bending his full and beauteous eye
Upon the scene so tranquilly!
He seems to heed no danger nigh,
For peaceful is that scenery !

.

Hark to yon wild and distant strain,
Which dies away, and swells again.
From yonder leafy wood, the hum
Of human voices seems to come ;
Again that wild and martial air
O'er yonder brow is echoing there ;
And now around the mountain's steep,
A glittering band is seen to creep
With measured pace and footsteps slow,
To the hawthorn dell which lies below.

.

The deer has heard yon music swell,
And he flies away o'er flood and fell ;
For the sound of that wild and distant horn,
Which he hath heard so oft at break of morn,
Hath aroused the brute from its peaceful dream,
As he lay in the bed of the mountain stream ;
And he bounds o'er the rocks to the tangled glen,
To hide him away from human ken ;
For nature bids him shun man's face,
Nor trust one hour that faithless race,
For he knows full well, that had he stayed,
In his heart would have been the huntsman's blade,
And the hound would have struck its fang in his skin,
'Mid the swell of the horns and the hunter's din,
By no one heeded his pangs or cry,
But all rejoicing to see him die.

.

'Tis a piteous sight to see the stag,
When pressed by the hounds, begin to flag ;
To see the big tear chase quickly fast
Down his lorn cheek the tear just past,
To hear his low and plaintive wail,
As he feels his strength begin to fail,
To see him fall by speed o'erborne,
His spotted hide by the wild dog torn—

To see him pant as he lies on the ground,
'Mid the savage crew which yells around ;
While man, the lord of all, takes pride
To strike the blade in his beauteous hide,
Flushed with the chase, and careless of him
Whose eye grows glazed, and soon will be dim !
Hark ! the parting breath is leaving the deer,
Where is the friend who will weep o'er his bier ?

.

From out the dell hath come the band,
With hound in leash and hawk in hand ;
And gaily in the front careers,
Surrounded by his brother peers,
Gonzalvo, chief of Cintra's line !
On whose bright casque the sunbeams shine,
As he wheels his steed and carolls by,
In the conscious pride of majesty.
But his train is larger there I ween,
Than what for the chase hath there been seen,
And there is more of shew and pride,
In the look of those who around him ride,
While the Red Cross waves above his head,
The type of a Knight who for Christ hath bled,

In the holy land which is far away,
Where he hath been to fight and pray,
'Gainst the Infidel Turk, who still is there,
Mocking the Christians' sword and prayer!

.

To Conrad's Tower, upon the land
Which crowns the beauteous vale beneath,
With careful steps Gonzalvo's band
'Mid laurel dark and ivy wreath
Around the rugged pathway creep,
Till they have gained the forest's steep.
There issuing from the shady scene,
Before them lies the velvet green,
Bedecked with nature's wildest flowers,
Which spring before old Conrad's towers.
And now they form in close array;
Each sign of dust is wiped away;
The knights at their post, the herald before,
His right hand the staff of office bore,
While the clarion's loud and piercing thrill
Rang fiercely long, and wildly shrill,
And struck on a heart within that tower
Like a funeral knell, when death doth lour.

.

The fatal hour hath come at last
Which gave a bride to Cintra's chief.
But never since that hour hath passed
The hue of deep and settled grief
Hath left fair Mora's youthful cheek—
The rose's blush which loved to play
On that mild brow, so sweet and meek,
Hath shrunk and faded since that day ;
And in its place, a settled gloom
Hath swept that radiant smile away—
Like some young plant, whose early bloom,
Chilled by the blast, must soon decay—
The sun which could have warmed, hath set,
The ray which cheered her heart is gone,
And Mora, brooding o'er each fond regret,
Hath now nor sun nor ray to look upon.

.

Within the wounded heart, that cell,
Which shuns the gaze of human eye,
Where pain and sorrow inly swell
And riot in their misery,
There Memory holds her secret spell,
Reviving cherished dreams of yore ;
Alas ! remembered but too well,
They only paint our loss the more.

There may we weep and brood alone,
O'er buried hopes of former years,
And never to the world must own
The secret of our silent tears.
Well may they flow—when we are reft
From hope of peace and joy below,
One last poor comfort may be left,
The selfish fullness of our woe.
We turn to dream, to madly think
On days of bliss for ever fled,
For Memory holds the fatal link
Which only breaks when we are dead—
Though bitter be such thoughts again,
Though doomed alone with life to part,
Oh! there is pleasure in the pain
Which paints the idol of our heart!
That paints anew with freshened power
The tear, the sigh, the thrilling kiss
We shared with one in happier hour,
When all our dreams were dreams of bliss!
Fondly we dreamt—but now awake,
We know such dreams of bliss are gone :
What rests the fevered fire to slake?
The memory of such dreams alone !

.

The sun is setting o'er yon hill
Its beams of glory lingering still.
Those hues along the face of heaven
In wild expanse of splendour driven,
Shed o'er this fading world below
The halo of their heavenly glow.
Each distant cloud reflecting bright
The hues of that angelic sight,
So grand, so beauteous to behold,
Seem for a moment tinged with gold.
The air above, around their head,
In one wide blaze of burning red
Proclaims aloud the majesty
Of heaven's best luminary,
Which leaves old Cintra's brows to-night,
Then turns on other realms his light,
Awakening now some distant sphere,
Which hails his beams, as they appear,
Still ever fresh, as when at first
Such splendor on creation burst.
Still unsubdued by ages past,
Those beams of glory still shall last,
Nor fade away, till God shall call
The sun, the world, mankind and all

With the last trump, at that dread hour
 When sun and stars shall lose their power,
 To be the chaos that they were,
 Ere they were formed, and fixed in air,
 By the sole word of God alone,
 Who sits immortal on his throne !
 To him alone that hour's revealed,
 To all but God that hour is sealed !

.

The Sun is gone, and now the busy hum
 Of this poor fleeting world is hushed to rest,
 And twilight's grey and tranquil hour is come,
 Like some soft fancied vision of the blest.
 And all is still, save where the bulbul sings
 Its tributary lay at this lone hour ;
 • Save where the tinkling sheep-bell gently rings,
 Or where the watch-dog bays from yonder tower !
 Man on his troubled couch hath sunk to sleep—
 Brief respite from his cares, to be renewed
 When he shall wake to morn, to toil and reap
 The tares that he hath sown and ne'er subdued !
 Poor minion of an hour ! Of what to thee
 Is all thy pomp, thy glory, and thy fame ?

When thou hast toiled through all life's heaving sea,

What hast thou gained that will preserve thy name ?

And kindle in the breast of one compeer

Who revelled in thy joys, one pure regret

That thou art gone, and art the thing all fear !

Will one fond eye for thee be dimmed and wet ?

Will one kind heart weep o'er thy lonely bier ?

Will one firm friend e'er wish thee once more here ?

Or light at Memory's lamp true friendship's holiest flame,

That can survive the dead, and hallow up thy name ?

.

Few, few shall feel ; and if one eye may weep

O'er the poor faded form, when it hath paid

Life's last and mournful debt, that well should steep

All human frailties in death's dreaded shade,

It may be that the tear will flow from one

From whom we had no right to call a sigh,

While those who should have wept, will smile anon,

And o'er the turf will heedlessly pass by,

To sport above our tomb, like any other fly !

.

Truce to such meditations :—man is still

What he hath ever been, and still shall be,

Alive but to himself, feeling no thrill
 To gaze upon the end of vanity !
 That well should curdle all the buoyant blood
 Beating in his distempered veins ; but Time,
 The world, self-interest, and the flood
 Of mortal apathy in every clime,
 Usurp the heart of age, and chill e'en manhood's prime !

.

Back to our strain, if strain it can be named,
 The gathering of a tale, a fading lay,
 Which treasures up the name of one defamed,
 Whose blossom withered in her earliest day !
 Yet left upon the gale that strewed the flower,
 And cropt its beauties in their opening morn,
 Some record of its sweets, for one short hour
 Perchance to live in song, though death hath torn
 Long from this earth the stem, by rudest sorrow worn !

.

Would that some gentler bard had struck the lyre
 That now respondeth to thy mournful tale ;
 Though mine may to the minstrel's task aspire,
 Some chord may be unstrung, some note to fail,
 That would awaken in another's hand

The generous tear for sorrow such as thine !
Rude as my song may be, it may command
One tear from beauty's eye, that will refine
The harshness of the note, though woke by touch like
mine.

.

There is a light in yonder tower—
What doth it there at such an hour ?
For the moon hath wove her chain o'er the deep,
And this is the hour of rest and sleep.
And the wind is hushed, and all is still
But the sound which is heard of the mountain rill,
As it lightly falls o'er the rocks of gray,
In its silvery sheet of glittering spray.
You may see it now as the moonbeams fall,
Forming its bright arch, round but small,
Like the bow which is seen in the watery sky
When the thunder cloud is passing by,
The type of that arch which God hath given
As his mercy beam, and set in heaven
In days of old, when the flood was o'er,
As a token that such should come no more ;
And since this world anew began,
To the sinful race of fallen man

That arch of hope hath been seen to play
 'Mid the watery clouds as they past away.

.

But the moon should hide her beams to-night
 Away from such deeds as shun the light ;
 For the doers are some who cannot stay
 For the opening beams of the coming day.
 No, theirs is a deed which had well been hid
 Like the mould'ring dust 'neath the coffin's lid.
 But they must live on, and feel the chill
 Which ever remains to the doers of ill—
 The canker-worm that will ever prey
 O'er the shivering form till it turns to clay.
 And amid all the transient scenes of joy
 That we madly raise, such thought to destroy,
 The pang will come, and bring distress,
 Icing our hopes of happiness !

.

And Mora is *now* by Alonzo's side.
 Who hath taken away Gonzalvo's bride ?
 Again she is clasped to her lover's breast,
 Once more to that much-loved form is preat,
 And wildly rapturous is the kiss
 Which they tremblingly snatch in their guilty bliss.

But they must fly, for o'er yon brow
The morning's blush is coming now !
And when it spreads o'er the mountain's height
They should be far away on their flight,
Far o'er old ocean's troubled wave to roam,
To find a safer, not a happier home !

.

Where was Gonzalvo—where was he
When Mora sped o'er the deep blue sea ?
Did he slumber then at such an hour,
When worse than death assailed his tower ?
Or did he listless let her rove,
Faithless to him, but true to love ?
He was away, too far it seems removed
From one he trusted, and from one he loved !

.

At Lisbon's royal court they hold
A Tournament, the sport of old ;
And thither was Gonzalvo gone,
Leaving his youthful bride alone !
He had been summoned as the pride
Of chivalry, the lists to ride,
And prove anew his title bought
In Eastern climes by deeds well wrought,

In many a dark and doubtful fight,
Where he upheld the Christian's right,
And scared the Moslem from his prey,
Keeping the Infidel at bay.
But better had it been that he
Had never crossed o'er Paynim sea ;
Yea, better had he fallen then,
With many other gallant men,
Beneath the bloody Moslem's spear,
Without reproach, remorse or fear,
Than thus return and be undone,
By one beneath his native sun.

.

Too soon the messenger of ill
Unto the Lord of Cintra came ;
He heard enough his breast to chill,
And wear his very heart with shame.
He was a man, though proud of fame,
Alive to pity and to pain ;
And to his soul he felt the stain
That blighted now his haughty name.
He deeply felt, yet knew that he
Had never been by Mora loved,
That heart had not been his, and she
Had now her youthful passion proved.

Forced by a parent's harsh command,
She gave, 'twas all she could, her hand ;
But love and heart to one was given,
From infancy in sight of heaven.
And he had married her early years,
Filling those eyes of blue with tears,
And been to her the cause of woe,
Wrecking her happiness below.
True, he had loved her, and had tried
By tenderness her love to win,
No wish to her by him denied,
Yet he had been the source of sin
To one he prized, and could not hate !
Worn was each thought, but now too late ;
For she was gone, and both must share
The cup of anguish and despair,
For well he knew that when the thirst
Of passion's fever slaked at last,
Reflection then would madly burst,
And ne'er from Mora's heart be past :
While he should never be again
What he had been through life till then.
But lone and weary he must tread
This life, till numbered with the dead.

He could not rase from out his breast
The thoughts of what he once possest ;
Nor cease to feel, that but for him
Lost Mora's eye had not been dim.

.

There's a note of woe in Conrad's tower,
 " And the raven flaps his funeral wing,"
And the shadow of death is seen to lower,
 As that lonely bird the air doth wring
With his hollow note, which pierces through
 To the sinking heart—man dreads to hear
The croak of that death bird ; when in view
 The stoutest heart they say will fear,
As it's mournfully borne by the echoing breeze,
From the top of yon clump of hoary trees ;
For they tell that yon bird will never come
Near the house of mirth, or joyful hum
Of the human voice, but stays away,
Till it scents from afar the approach of decay ;
And then it will perch on the nearest tree,
To wait for the wreck of humanity !
And whet his beak for the goodly cheer
Of some sinking wretch who's failing near.
And some they say have seen him flap
'Gainst the lattice bars, and fiercely rap,

As if he could not wait till death
Had wrung from man his latest breath !
As if resentful that the worm
Should feed before him on the form,
When it's laid within the mouldering tomb,
That charnel-house of mortal gloom !

.

I said there was a note of woe,
As if a soul were about to go
From earth, to where it soon must be
Summoned to joy or misery !
And Conrad's on his dying bed,
And life from him will soon be fled ;
His head is restless on his pillow,
His thoughts are on the heaving billow,
With her he fondly hoped to find
The prop of his declining mind.
But ne'er again shall he be blest
 With light of his beloved child ;
And he must bleed, and sink oppressed
 By thoughts, that she, by love beguiled,
Had strayed from duty's sterner course,
 And thus had brought him to disgrace ;
Yet still old Conrad felt remorse,
 And longed again for one embrace,

That he might bless her, though defiled,
And gaze once more on that sweet face,
Where now he only wished to trace
The *sainted mother*, in his child !
Oh ! he had done her wrong he felt,
And forced her to become a bride
Against her heart, and rudely dealt
With one he never used to chide.
But what availed that child his grief ?
Would bitter tears afford relief ?
Could they recall her back again,
Or free her from the guilty stain,
Which now had sunk the well-earned fame
Of Conrad's house in woe and shame ?
He turned him on his restless bed ;
The damp of death was on his brow ;
And fevered was that aged head,
As mournfully he raised it now
To call Gonzalvo to his side,
Who watched him as he pass'd away
From this poor fleeting home of pride,
To mingle with his parent clay !

“ Hear me Gonzalvo, hear the last
Request of him, who soon will be
From all this earthly trouble past,
From all its sickening follies free.
Hear me, Gonzalvo : we have been
To one we loved the cause of ill ;
And thou art left alone to glean
The sternness of a father’s will.
Forgive the past ; and should’st thou meet
With that frail child, when I am dead,
Oh ! may thy heart with pity beat,
Nor light thy vengeance on her head.
Thou knew’st no love could she bestow,
For *that*, by time or care unmoved,
Hath never from Alonzo roved ;
And but for us, it now would glow
With virtue’s best and purest flame,
Which thou and I have quenched in shame !
But I am passing to my grave :
This last, a parting boon I crave,
That thou wilt mercy shew to one,
Whom thou and I have both undone.

Grant me this boon, so grief will sit
Less on my heart, and I shall quit
This life with shorn regret, if thou
Wilt mercy to poor Mora vow !
Give me thy hand—when I shall die,
Then kindly close this fading eye ;
And may thy parting hour be free
From sorrow such as killeth me."

END OF FIRST CANTO.

CANTO II.

THERE is a small bark, on the bright blue sea,
 Borne from its eastern verge, before the gale,
And lightly now it doth appear to flee,
 Crowding above the deep its opening sail;
Stretching its canvass with the favouring wind,
 Which bears it gaily o'er the foaming wave,
So quick, it scarcely leaves a track behind,
 So frail, it almost meets a watery grave.

.

And there are some within that bark, who fear
 Lest the rude wind should slacken o'er the deep,
And in the eye of one, there stands a tear,
 Which comes too often there for her to sleep;
For she is thinking on her native strand,
 Where she can never hope nor wish to be.

No—she must seek afar some other land,
To hide from one she flies, her loss of purity.

.

Swift flew the bark across the sea,
Rose the blue wave to whitest foam,
And to the seaman's wary e'e,
The Curlew now was speeding home ;
As if it fear'd a storm to night,
Full wild and quickened was its flight,
Nor stayed one moment on its way,
To sport above its scaly prey ;
And often and anon its cry
Came with the breeze so mournfully,
It struck the heart of those who heard,
As if that wild and wandering bird
Foretold some danger then was near,
Though yet the sky looked bright and clear.
Many an anxious eye was bent
O'er the rough sea, to where the sun
His last and lingering glories lent,
Ere yet his daily course was run.
Yet there was little in the air,
To the mere eye, which could declare

That a rude night was gathering there;
All seemed above so bright and fair:
Save to that mind which could descry
How storm and tempest hover'd nigh.

.

It came at last, a tiny speck,
First noticed by the watch on deck:
A small round cloud, so small it seemed,
Just where the sun had lately gleamed,
That none but seaman's glance could tell,
How that small cloud would wildly swell.
But as it rose within their view,
Full well the wary seaman knew,
That if it gathered height, 'twould spread
In one dark mass above their head,
And the loud thunder then would rave,
The herald of a watery grave,
Perhaps to some who now asleep
Lay tranquil on the heaving deep,
In sweet unconsciousness of ill,
As if the winds were hushed as still,
As if the wild and foaming billow
Were tranquil as their downy pillow;

And wind and wave, by toil opprest,
Had sunk like mortal man to rest.

.

The moon is up; her feeble light,
But dimly shews the murky night:
The stars are fading in the sky,
And the loud wind came whistling by
The lonely bark, which held its way
Amid the roar of the rude waves' play.
Louder and fiercer blew the gale,
Ye scarce could hear the boatswain's hail:
And the dark cloud was gathering near—
It was a sight to see and fear.
The wild wave beat above the prow;
The seaman's heart was failing now;
The sails were furled, the creaking mast
Bent with the rough and trying blast,
While every gust that fiercely blew,
Proclaimed the tempest's force anew.

.

Night came and went—the morning's hour
Seemed to augment the whirlwind's power;
Screamed the wild wind, the wilder wave
Swept o'er the bark, which yet did brave

The volleying shock of that dark sea,
Which rolled along so awfully!
While all around the thunder's crash
Followed quick the lightning's flash,
Whose fiery stream but served to shew
The horrors of the gale below.
Wave rolled on wave; the eddying spray
Fiercely and strongly made its way;
While every shock which rudely broke
On the worn bark with wilder stroke,
Lashed it, as if the coming sea
Would plunge it to eternity!
Yet still it rose, then plunged again,
Amid the trough of that dark main;
There seemed to gather fresher force,
As if rejoicing in its course,
Reared its frail form above the wave,
And 'scaped anew a watery grave!

.

For days their dangerous track they held,
And little was the force dispelled
Of the rude wind, and ruder sea!
The tear was starting in the e'e

Of the lorn seaman, and the prayer,
Long cherished in his anxious breast,
That the dread storm would sink to rest,
Was now succeeded by despair.
The thoughts of all he left behind,
Came crowding o'er his sinking mind ;
And the rough man was now subdued,
By the loud wail of womanhood !
His wife and child, friends, home and all,
Came o'er his heart, and sank his soul,
As bitter memory did recal
All that he loved !—the big tear stole
Down his marred cheek—in that dark hour
The seaman felt the tempest's power !

.

What was his grief to one below,
What were his fears, his thoughts or care,
To one whose tears must ever flow,
To one who dared not raise the prayer ?
To one whose conscious looks revealed
The thought within her bosom sealed,
Of some deep sin she dared not own !
For some deep crime her country floun !
And now upon the billows tost,
Even the hope of pardon lost,

Weighed with remorse, with fear and grief,
 Nor calm nor storm can bring relief
 To one frail mind, and frailer form,
 Which quailed beneath the angry storm !

.

Alonzo pressed her to his heart :

“ Life of my soul ! whate’er may be
 Our weal or woe, we ne’er will part.
 Though the rough wind and wilder sea
 Come as the heralds of our doom,
 One wave shall hide us in its gloom ;
 Unchanged through life, in death the same,
 The wind shall murmur Mora’s name ;
 And the last sigh that parts my breast,
 Shall fondly pray for Mora’s rest.”

.

Hark ! to yon shout upon the deck above,
 Raised was the cry in triumph or despair ?
 Came it a respite to that one, whose love
 Still fondly beamed through looks of anguish there ?
 Hark to that shout, again renewed !—it seemed
 As if the cry were one of hope and joy ;
 As if a ray long lost had brightly gleamed,
 As if the winds were hushed, unwilling to destroy.

.

Not raised in vain that joyful cry—
The clouds were clearing in the sky;
The thunder's now far distant roll
In muttering echo faintly stole
Round the worn crew, who hailed the beam
That faintly lent its feeble gleam.
Fainter and fainter broke the peal,
And brighter now the stars reveal
Through the dark vault their cheering light,
As wore away the troubled night.
The swell of that tempestuous sea
Yet rolled along in majesty;
But the loud wind had spent its breath,
And as the morning lightly broke
O'er the green main, a hope awoke
To raise their hearts from thoughts of death.

.

Calmer and calmer grew the waves ;
The softened billow gently laves
The shatter'd bark, then dies away
Before the morn's reviving ray.

.

The wind is hushed, the waves are still,
The forest slumbers on the hill

.

Of yon lone isle, which comes in view,
Lit with many a varied hue.
And o'er yon high and peaked brow
The shades of night are passing now ;
Fast flying to the distant west,
To seek anew some place of rest ;
For here a fiery orb hath sway,
A glorious sun proclaims the day,
And his broad beams shoot up on high
To cheer the freshened, gladdened sky,
Which now reëchoes with the swell
Of many a bird, who wild and well
Pours joyous forth its harmony
In sweetest notes of melody ;
While many an aery wheel is given
Into the vault of purpled heaven,
Where faintly soft is heard to reign
The music of yon warbler's strain.
And ever as it wings its flight
Along those beauteous realms of light,
Its matin song falls sweetly clear
Upon the listener's wondering ear !

.

Who are the listeners—who are they
That hear yon warbler's early lay?
Who gaze upon yon lovely isle,
Where the light spray is seen to while
In playful mood upon the strand
Of that most gorgeous verdant land?
And where yon waters gently break
In a deep murmur on the shore,
The wild swan dips its crested neck,
Then culls its snowy plumage o'er;
The parrot's cry, so sharp and shrill,
Echoes from the neighbouring hill;
The lazy penguin rears its head,
Emerging from the pebbly bed;
For here the human form hath been
By the lone tenants yet unseen,
And the wild bird hath yet to find
The treason of all human kind:
For peaceful still and undisturbed
Hath been the haven of each bird;
Their resting place, the gift of God,
Hath ne'er by mortal foot been trod.
Nor human eye, nor human voice
Hath bid the wild bird not rejoice;

But free, and far from human ken,
 From the rude haunts of savage men,
 Their life hath been, until this hour,
 Happy on beach, in wood and bow'r :
 Unconscious of their coming pain,
 They raise aloft their joyous strain ;
 As if they felt that they were blest
 In this, their happy Isle of rest.

.

Mixed on the deck the wondering crew
 Gaze on a scene to them so new.
 All danger past, their fears forgot—
 Or if remembered, yet the scene
 Of that sweet isle of varied green,
 Can soothe them to their destined lot,
 And lull to sleep each transient care,
 Which they perchance are doom'd to share!

.

From yon lone rock that beetles o'er the bay,
 Where rose in fitful whirl the silvery spray,
 Lashing its side, as if it loved to mock
 With its light foam the darkness of that rock,
 As if it wooed its sternness to decay,
 Before the wild luxuriance of its play—

From yon lone rock the feathered tribe arise,
And greet with loud acclaim the purpled skies.
Nearer and nearer as the boat draws on,
The feathered tribe around them fearless throng,
And some so near wheeled by their rapid flight,
Their golden pinions gleaming in the light,
They almost seemed to court the seaman's hand,
Skimming before them as they neared the land,
As if to lead them o'er the tranquil bay,
Or guide above the wave their dubious way.
Fearless of human eye and human face,
They speed before them lightly on their course,
Careless and reckless of their mortal foe,
In blest unconsciousness of coming woe!

.

It was as light and pure a day
As ever rose on that sweet isle,
And far and near the purpled ray
Of the broad sun lit up each pile
Of those wild hills, whose æry height
Was lately lost in shade of night.
Each pointed rock and forward brow
Hath caught its opening splendour now,

And ye might see the mountain rill
Gleam bright along yon distant hill,
As it dashed along the forest's steep,
To lay its waters in the deep.
Amid the dark umbrageous wood,
Flashed far and clear the mountain flood,
As it caught the bright and blessed ray
Of the glorious sun at break of day.

.

List to yon strain that sweeps along the sea,
In the full tide of purest harmony.
Full of deep feeling, wafted on the air,
Comes the sweet chaunted breath of morning prayer;
And mid each pause, the oars in measured time,
Fill up the softness of that sacred chime.
How wild and solemn is that melody,
How tremulous, wrapt with melancholy,
As if the heart whence rose that heavenly strain
Had felt too well the weight of mortal pain.
Was it a fallen spirit hovering nigh
To the bright opening of yon lovely sky?
Or but a mortal voice which sang that lay,
A voice which long from earth and life hath passed away?

.

The light drip sparkles on the oar,
And far beyond the breakers' roar,
Moored on the beach a boat doth rest,
High on its sand-bound sloping crest.
And near yon solitary tree,
That's waving there so wildly free,
Above its brethren of the wood,
Lost Mora by Alonzo stood.
His arm was placed around her waist,
Her head reclining on his breast;
And there they stood, a guilty pair,
To breathe the fragrance which the air,
From orange grove, and citron bower,
Was offering there at that soft hour:
Like our first parents, near that tree,
Which, placed 'mid Eden's bower, arose
The beacon of mortality,
The tree of knowledge and of woes.
Like them they stood; and in their face
The sense of shame you there might trace,
Of fallen virtue, withered fame,
Of guilty fears, and ruined name.
Oh! happy if they ne'er had strayed
From the pure bounds of virtue's sway,

Too happy, if sin's darkening shade
Had not obscured their early day !

.

And Mora turned her deep blue eye
Upon a face which gazed on her,
With all that sense of misery,
In that lorn look, which woes confer,
When, struggling to express your grief,
You vainly hope to find relief
From those dark thoughts which wear the breast,
That idly claims, yet finds no rest :
A world of bitter pain within,
The weight too great of conscious sin.
Scarce breathed, yet felt, alas ! too well,
How borne, let those who suffer, tell.
The feeling that her name was blighted ;
The hope of better days benighted ;
The sire she loved, whose drooping age
No more could filial love assuage ;
All these rush'd o'er, and left no ray,
To save that bosom from decay,
To soothe that heart, or calm that face,
Where all the charm of beauty's grace,

In happier and in purer days,
Had been a distant nation's praise.
Alas! how changed; and she was now
What her parched lips dare not avow;
But o'er her cheek the scalding tear
Best tells the crime she dreads to hear!

.

She hears it not; but o'er her soul
The troubled vision yet will roll,
And with that inward voice which breathes
Its unheard tone throughout the heart—
That deep, but silent monitor which scathes,
And bids defiance to all art,
To quaff oblivion's cup, and be
From conscience' sting and sorrow free;
Dread Memory speaks, and brings to view
The hidden deed she now must rue!

.

What felt Alonzo?—he was there,
The very statue of despair!
And as he viewed that beauteous form,
Pale, worn, and ploughed by sorrow's storm,
Sink on his breast so mute and still,
As if all sense of worldly ill

Had passed for ever from her mind,
Leaving no trace of life behind,
On his sick heart and shuddering frame
All of his sin and passion came ;
And made him curse that fatal night,
When he had spurned Gonzalvo's right,
And with forbidden vows of love
Had wooed that frail but lovely dove
To leave its rude, but fostering shade,
Once lost, no more to find such glade !

.

He bore her from that lonely tree,
To where the mountain torrent sped,
And gently, but all tremblingly,
He chafed that cold and marble brow,
Which, senseless, wan, and pallid now,
The very emblem of the dead,
Revived not to the watery spray,
So mute, so motionless she lay !
And o'er that form so fair and young,
In settled grief Alonzo hung ;
While gathering round, the pitying crew
Wept at a scene to them so new !

.

List ! she revives—each languid vein
Slowly resumes its pulse again ;
So faintly beats, you well might say
That life was wearing fast away,
For the fond look of that blue eye
Was setting fast on vacancy !
And the slow heaving of that breast,
Which soon must settle into rest,
Scarce told that life was left the power
To flutter there for one short hour !
Yet still as sense and thought returned,
With fondest wish that bosom burned ;
For him, still treasured to the last,
Each look of love was gently cast.
And there was more in that sweet gaze,
Which spake of earlier, happier days,
Than all the charm of minstrel's swell
Could here record as soft and well.
It was the language of a heart
Which still unwilling to depart,
Though struck with death, would yet endeavour
To cling to one she loved, for ever !

.

She tried to speak, but all in vain,
'Twas only adding unto pain.

Again essayed, in feeblest moan
Sank the imperfect dying tone ;
Yet still within her eye there shone
The light of loveliness not gone ;
Which trembled there upon the brink
Of Death, and feebly held the link,
The last frail link, of life's weak chain,
Once broke, to never meet again !
Yet oh ! though lovely to the last,
That beam of love must soon be past ;
'Tis fading quick, but still is bent
On one, for whom *her heart* is rent—
On one, who *scarce* appears to live.
What would not now Alonzo give,
Could he recall with one fond kiss
The heart he loved to life, to bliss ?
But all in vain—Death's sickening hue
On Mora's pallid forehead grew,
And the dull film hath quenched her sight,
And turned those beauteous eyes to night ;
While faintly now doth pass the flutt'ring breath
Of one, the loveliest of her sex, in death !

.

They raise Alonzo from her side,
And gently hasten to unclasp
His hand from hers, who just had died ;
But firmly held was Mora's grasp
Within the stiffening hand of him
Whose heart grew cold, whose eye grew dim.
With the last sigh which bore her soul
From all life's bondage and control,
His heart had closed to all the strife
And weariness of mortal life !
And they were numbered with the dead,
Their " love and life together fled ;"
And thus united, they had past,
As they had wished, to death at last.
Whate'er their future doom might be,
Their life had known some misery !

.

Some moons had passed, since that sad pair had died,
Whom the rough crew had buried side by side
Beneath that tree, whose spreading branches waived
Above their grave, a dark and grateful shade.
The rites were simple—a small mound of earth,
Decked with the wild flowers, sodded with the turf ;

And a rude cross some pious hand had placed
Above the mound, while some kind friend had traced
Their names around the bark of that dark tree
Which waived so proudly o'er the verdant lea ;
And as the still and quiet hour of night
Would fold its curtain o'er that island bright,
The chaunted voice of evening prayer was heard,
That these sad relics might not be disturbed ;
And hope its breathings mingled with the prayer
Each heart would offer for the erring pair.

.

The mournful crew the steep would toil each day,
To view the ocean with its wild waves play,
In hope some friendly sail might pass that isle,
Whence flashed the signal from the fire-lit pile.
For their worn bark, so shattered by the shock
Of that rude gale, had sank beside the rock ;
And their frail boat, which bore them to the land,
Was rashly broken by some idle hand ;
And thus abandoned to despair, the crew
Fresh anguish from each morrow daily drew.
Moons rolled away, and fainter hopes would steal
Within each breast, and sadder thoughts reveal,

That exiled there, their lives might pass away,
To add fresh heaps to yonder mound of clay.
Wild were their councils, and as hope declined,
Sank the stern vigor of each seaman's mind ;
And but for Pero, chief of that rude band,
Who yet upheld the secret of command,
Wild might have been their deeds ; for wildest thought
Would press its venom on such minds, o'erwrought
By care and exile, driving to despair
A crew once gentle, by their suffering there.

.

The night had passed ; and with the earliest gleam
That Phœbus lit the ocean with its beam,
Waived the glad signal of a distant sail
That spread its canvass to the eastern gale.
“ A sail ! a sail ! ” reëchoed from the hill ;
“ A sail ! a sail ! ” rocks, woodland, valley fill.
Loud was the clamour of each rapturous tongue,
Warm was the welcome of the pressing throng
That rushed to where yon jutting headland gave
Its frowning rampart to the glittering wave.
And tears would trickle down the flushing cheek
Of each worn seaman, that to one so meek

And yet so manly as their chief had been,
Amid the trials of their exiled scene,
They had forgotten for a moment there,
The debt of duty to his fostering care.
Did he remember?—not within such breast,
Could aught of passion or resentment rest :
They had been fellow sufferers, and his mind,
Stamped as it was so high above his kind,
Knew how to feel, to pity, not condemn
The transient folly that distracted them.

.

The ship drew nearer, quicker, nearer drew,
Shrill was the signal which the boatswain blew ;
Furled was each sail ; the anchor's peakèd head
Flashed o'er the bows, and in the ocean's bed
Grappled the sand, and in that golden bay
The bark was steadied, and securely lay.

.

Down to the beach the joyful crew did haste,
To greet their brethren from the watery waste ;
And through the surf, which gathering with its roar,
Swept the dark boat upon that beauteous shore,
Rushed the wild seamen, offering their rough hand
Of joy and welcome to the stranger band !

But who is He, whose high and princely mien
Stands most conspicuous in this wildest scene ?
To whom each stranger paid with reverence there
Such prompt obedience to his word and air ?
He was no stranger to the wondering crew !
One glance sufficient, did their fears renew.
Gonzalvo ! he, whose bride aloft they bore
With young Alonzo from their native shore ;
Gonzalvo ! wildly rings that name : 'tis he,
He comes revengeful o'er the dark blue sea.
How did he find their home, their track how gain,
That brought him safely o'er the bounding main ?
To them a marvel—but too soon the tale,
How, when their ship to lighten in the gale,
They threw their masts upon the watery waste,
To save their vessel in its fearful haste :
How as his ship pursued their fragile bark,
The masts were seen with Pero's well-known mark.
Awed with his look in silence they retire,
To wait the sentence of his dreaded ire !

.

Within that breast what burning thoughts did range,
With quick convulsion, and with quicker change ?
How oft the name of Mora would he try
In calm to utter, but his tongue was dry.

Each thought that rushed upon his labouring breast,
 Of past endearment, robbing it of rest,
 Of the sad fate that Pero ventured now
 To breathe of her, his troubled soul did bow.
 The vow he gave unto her dying sire,
 That he would pity, quenched the rising ire.

.

He heard it all—no vengeful word awoke
 To mar the tale which Pero gently broke ;
 How died lost Mora, how their spirits sank
 With deep endurance of the cup they drank :
 The cup of suffering, sorrow, and of pain,
 Which sin had gathered with its maddening strain.

.

He waved his hand, and well did Pero know
 What thoughts were passing in that breast of woe.
 To the dark tree he leads the mournful chief,
 To vent his sorrow, and obtain relief ;
 To let the waters of his bursting heart
 From their pent cell some soothing balm impart ;
 And nature speaking, bade him bury there
 Each thought of anger, with that fallen pair.

.

Fast fell his tears above the noiseless dead !
 Tears such as angels might rejoice to shed !

For they were tears of pity, and they came
To wash the stain from off a much loved name.
Alas! they came too late—they could not save
All that was frail, but lovely, from the grave!
That power was past, and yonder heap of clay
Must ne'er awaken to a mortal day;
But in its deep and mould'ring place must rest,
Till it shall hear futurity's behest;
Till it shall stand before the Eternal Throne,
And hear its doom pronounced by God alone!

FINIS.

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